



**Debra Baetz**

Serving Our Community for 32 Years

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# SSA Director Debra Baetz Looks Back on Her Life and Career

BY CHI PHAM  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I

After 32 years of service to the Orange County community, SSA's Director Debra Baetz retires on August 11, 2022. The Community and Government Relations team recently sat down with Debra to discuss her life and her stellar career with SSA.

Debra's life began in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a place she describes as a small neighborhood town filled with commercial fisheries, mills and factories. She was born to Portuguese parents and her life revolved around her large extended family and friends. "I come from an everyday, immigrant family," Debra said. "I had the type of childhood where, every Sunday, my mom would make huge amounts of food just because someone from the family was going to show up at the house. There was a lot of love. A lot of strength."

During Debra's teenage years, her father left the family, leaving her mother to raise Debra and her younger brother on her own. To support her family, Debra dropped out of school at 16 and worked full-time in coat manufacturing, often hopping from mill to mill due to the instability of the work. With the encouragement of her 45-year-old aunt, she eventually went back to earn her high school diploma, joining her aunt for evening classes while continuing to work at the mill.

Soon after receiving her diploma, Debra moved with her mother and brother to Buena Park, where she found a job at a retail store and worked her way up to store manager. After a couple of years, however, she realized that retail management was not her calling. At the recommendation of one of her coworkers, Debra soon found herself accepting a job at SSA as an Eligibility Technician (ET) and attending the Medi-Cal Intensive Induction Training. "At the time, I took a job that I didn't understand and what I found was something that spoke to my heart," she said.

**"I loved working with the families and enjoyed the camaraderie that I had with the people that I worked with."**

Debra said two pieces of advice she received as an ET had the most impact on her growth. The first was, **"If there's a job you want, you have to start behaving as if you're already in that role,"** she said. "Use today to demonstrate the fact that you possess the abilities needed for that next opportunity." The second piece of advice was





leaders watch how you respond to critical feedback and disappointment.

**“You’re going to make mistakes. I make mistakes daily. You’re going to encounter barriers and challenges. But what are you going to do with this feedback? Will you use it to grow and learn or withdraw and react?”**

Over the next three decades, Debra went on to serve in various leadership positions throughout SSA, including Eligibility Supervisor, Program Assistant (Social Services Supervisor I), Assistant Regional Manager, Regional Manager, Divisional Operations Manager, Deputy Division Director and Division Director. During her career, Debra played key leadership roles in many Agency initiatives including the service delivery redesign in Assistance Programs, implementation of the CalWIN eligibility system, estab-

lishment of the SSA Call Center, implementation of the Affordable Care Act and transition of 50,000 Medical Services Initiative (MSI) clients to Medi-Cal. Her breadth of experience culminated in her appointment as SSA Director in 2018.

When asked about some of her most rewarding experiences at SSA, Debra described her time at Training & Career Development (TCD) as being personally impactful. Growing up, she felt very shy and would often avoid looking people in the eye. Becoming a trainer at TCD was what really started her growth journey, she said, helping her feel more confident and comfortable communicating in front of people. Her manager, Mary Jones-Wuerfl, also became her closest mentor. “When she thought I did something wrong, she gave me hard feedback,” Debra said. “But she always said that nothing is unfixable. Try to adjust, learn from this and move forward. Mary was one of my biggest champions in my career journey, providing not

only needed feedback but always encouraging me to move beyond my self-perceived limitations.”

During her time as Deputy Division Director, Debra earned her bachelor’s degree in public administration at California State University, Fullerton, after receiving encouragement from her former colleagues Wendy Aquin and John Hendrickson. “John was always pushing and encouraging me, ‘Go get your degree.’ Wendy would always say, ‘It only takes one class at a time and, before you know it, you are done.’” But her educational journey did not stop there. Debra was interested in advancing her education further and learning more about how to translate tools used in the private sector for public sector use. That desire resulted in her earning her master’s degree in business administration (MBA) at University of California, Irvine (UCI), after being awarded one of the first County UCI fellowship awards. Her advice to staff who may be on the fence about pursuing higher education?



Debra grew up in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where she supported her mother and brother by working full-time in coat manufacturing at age 16.



At the recommendation of a former colleague, Debra accepted her first job at SSA as an Eligibility Technician where she committed herself to serving Orange County’s most vulnerable populations.



Debra served in various leadership positions throughout SSA and was appointed Agency Director in 2018.

# THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

"Someone once told me that the train keeps moving down the track. You can choose to get on or not and you can decide to get off at any stop along the way. It doesn't matter how long the trip takes. What you don't want to do is, 10 years from now, say, 'I wish I did, I wish I could, I wish I had.'"

Looking back on her career, Debra stated, "I'm proud of the work we're doing today with the community and in support of our families. I'm proud of the Agency and our staff for being willing to challenge the processes and status quo. I'm proud of the work we're doing with the strategic plan. And I'm super proud of the way our staff are getting through COVID-19, their patience and resilience and how they have continued to meet the needs of our children, adults and seniors."

Debra's current and former County colleagues also offered some words of recognition to celebrate her contributions.

"I would like to thank Debra for her 32 years of dedicated service to SSA, the County and the residents of Orange County," County Executive Officer Frank

Kim said. "Her leadership, innovation and dedication to not only SSA employees but to the citizens in our county have helped countless lives in the greatest times of need. She leaves an incredibly talented Executive Team that will continue to model the exemplary work that Debra is known for. We wish you all the best in retirement, Debra."

Former SSA Chief Deputy Director Carol Wiseman, another mentor who supported Debra during her first year as Agency Director, shared, "Throughout her years at SSA, Debra has always attacked issues passionately and head on. Here's hoping she embraces the joys of retirement with that same passion!"

When asked what she has planned for retirement, Debra said she will be taking some short road trips up the California coast. She will also be spending time with her brother, wedding planning with her oldest daughter who is getting married in March and driving cross country with her mother. "I promised myself I would give myself one year," Debra said. "A sabbatical before I get back into whatever it is I want

to do."

Of all the experiences of her career over the last 32 years, Debra says she will miss the people at SSA the most. If there is one final piece of advice she would want to leave with staff, it is to never lose sight of the power of intervention in the life of someone in need. "My journey and passion for the work we do is driven by the understanding of the challenges our clients face each day," Debra said. "I often say that most of us who gravitate to this field have a back story. My story is no different than the challenges many of those we serve face today. I wouldn't be here without the interventions and support I have had along the way. Intervention is just a little boost someone needs to get through the next day. Your interventions today will have an outcome that you may not see the benefit of. But know that someday, somewhere in the future, someone's going to say, 'Without that assistance, I wouldn't be where I am today.'"

SSA celebrates Debra Baetz for 32 amazing years of service. Please join us in congratulating Debra for her contributions and accomplishments.





# SSA Spotlight:

## California CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review

BY NADIA MORADI  
SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR II

In July 2021, the County of Orange Social Services Agency (SSA)'s Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services Division (FSS-AS) launched California's CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review (Cal-OAR), a statutory mandate that requires all counties to implement a continuous quality improvement process and a data-driven program management system to develop best practices by leveraging the data available to them. Following this requirement, FSS-AS's Policy and Quality Assurance team formed the Cal-OAR team to work collaboratively within SSA to ensure the Cal-OAR rollout is a success.

The Cal-OAR continuous quality improvement process includes the following components:

- **County Self-Assessment Report:** A comprehensive analysis of the CalWORKs program using qualitative and quantitative data, 26 performance measure rates to gauge the accountability of the program and stakeholder feedback.
- **System Improvement Plan:** A detailed plan to implement improvement strategies targeting program outcomes and service delivery.
- **Progress Reports:** Three progress reports to evaluate the implementation of the improvement plan to ensure it is working as intended.

Prior to Cal-OAR, the federal Work Participation Rate (WPR) measure that defines the activities and number of hours required to meet program requirements was historically the primary measurement of CalWORKs program outcomes. As a result, states and counties throughout the U.S. often focused singularly on improving their WPR percentages.

However, with Cal-OAR, a more comprehensive set of outcomes will define the success of the CalWORKs program. The new performance measures will focus on the following main categories:



From left: Phong Nguyen, Nadia Moradi, Arundhati Pattnaik, Nikta Laghaee and Bryan Chae

- **Participant Engagement and Participation Rate**
- **Service Delivery Rate**
- **Educational Attainment Rate**
- **Program Exit and Re-entry Rates**
- **Barrier Removal Rate**
- **Employment Rate**
- **Family and Child Well-Being Rate**

The performance measures will be calculated and reported based on data availability and will be available publicly. "Accountability" in Cal-OAR ensures counties are being transparent to the public and that services are continuously improving for the vulnerable populations we serve.

The Cal-OAR team invites you to join them on the journey to implementation. We encourage SSA staff to start thinking about how we can better enhance, support, streamline and integrate processes to ensure a more successful experience for our clients. In the coming months, staff can expect to hear more from SSA leadership and the Cal-OAR team about the growing need for feedback and ideas. The Cal-OAR team looks forward to improving its operations to better serve SSA and our community.

# Countywide Team Answers the Call to Help Afghan Refugees

BY TRACI MULDOON  
STAFF SPECIALIST

On May 10, 2022, the Orange County Board of Supervisors presented a resolution to SSA, Office of Care Coordination, OC Health Care Agency and nearly 40 community partners to recognize their collective work to resettle more than 500 displaced Afghan refugees who arrived in the U.S. after evacuating the Middle East in 2021.

To support Afghan refugees and families in transition to their new lives in the U.S., SSA collaborated with County and community partners to understand the unique needs of the Afghan arrivals and served as a liaison to the resettlement agencies to ensure a smooth provision of services on behalf of this vulnerable population.

SSA provided eligibility services at outreach events to connect refugees and their families with public assistance benefits, including CalWORKs, CalFresh, Medi-Cal and Refugee Cash Assistance. Staff assisted refugees on site with processing applications, assisting with benefit inquiries and providing translation services in Pashto, Dari and Farsi.

SSA collaborated with OC Health Care Agency and The Coalition of Orange County Community Health Centers to provide health assessments to all refugees upon arrival as well as provided healthcare navigation guidance for medically fragile and pregnant patients.

The Office of Care Coordination worked with community partners Families Forward, Family Crisis Center, Afghan Support and Investment Program, Pathways to Hope, United Way, Catholic Charities and World Relief to provide much needed housing assistance and support.

SSA and its contracted partners also assisted with educational and employment needs for refugee adults and children. Through collaboration with the Orange County Department of Education, more than 50 children were enrolled in school with translation services available in-person. To ensure self-sufficiency and assist with employment obstacles in a new country, SSA assisted nearly 30 refugee clients with resume building and job referrals. SSA's contracted providers Equus Workforce Solutions and Access California also provided resume building,



The Orange County Board of Supervisors recognized countywide efforts to support the Afghan refugees with a resolution presentation in May.

case management, interview preparation and transportation to English as a Second Language classes. "Without our County and community partners, the comprehensive support and services provided would not have been possible. It has truly taken a village and we are proud of the collective efforts to serve. We have shown our community and residents that we are better, together," said SSA Chief Deputy Director An Tran.

SSA is proud of the close collaboration with County and community partners to ensure that our Afghan neighbors are provided access to the services and resources they need to thrive and safely rebuild their lives in Orange County.

**SSA would like to give a special thanks to all partners and organizations that helped make these efforts possible:**

Uplift Charity, ICNA Relief, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Services (IRIS), International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA), Orange County Department of Education, CalOptima, Office of Care Coordination, Orange County Rescue Mission, Saddleback Church, Catholic Charities, World Relief, Jewish Families, Home For Refugees, Cypress College, Family Solutions Collaborative, Vineyard Church, Families Forward, Pathways of Hope, OC Health Care Agency, Coalition of Orange County Community Health Centers, Equus, Access California, Sabil USA, Afghan Refugee Relief, Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), WIC, Adventure City, Children International, Voice of Refugees, Thomas House, United Way, Family Crisis Center, Office of Refugee Health, OC Workforce, Assistance League of Anaheim, LDS Church of Yorba Linda, Orange County Transportation Authority, Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project, Islamic Center of Irvine



# National Reunification Month

BY ROSEMARY BROWN  
SENIOR SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR

June is National Reunification Month, a time to celebrate families who have and continue to put in the hard work to make their homes a safe place for their children and to raise awareness about the importance of reuniting children in foster care with their families.

Reunification focuses on safely returning children to their homes and providing services and supports to maintain a healthy environment for the family. When the risk of children staying in their home is too high due to safety concerns, reunification shifts to developing an alternative plan that gives children permanency in their lives.

SSA's Children & Family Services Division is charged with protecting and supporting abused and neglected children and their families.

The work toward reunification begins the moment a child enters the foster care system.

Reuniting families requires intense, family-centered services to support safety and stability. Services are specifically tailored to identify the issues and circumstances that brought the family into the dependency system. Case plans are developed in collaboration with each family to focus on the best interest and needs of the child.

A major component to successful reunification is the relationship between the social worker and the family. Transparency paired with genuine care, compassion and a critical eye on the safety and

well-being of children and their families builds trust and a positive working relationship. The more collaboratively the social worker and family work together, the higher the probability of not only a successful reunification, but sustainable, long-lasting change.

That relationship is further strengthened with collaborative strategies such as the Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs), which bring together professional support such as therapists, case managers and medical supports, as well as informal supports such as friends and family who are close to the child. Each family's unique team begins to develop



the moment a child is removed from their home. CFTMs are the foundations to building a long-term support network for the family to maintain a safe and healthy home for the child.

A family's reunification plan is reviewed at least every six months to ensure it remains targeted to safety concerns, provides any necessary updates and determine if out-of-home care is still needed. If the family is not making significant progress toward their child returning home after 12-18 months of services, California statute requires an alternative permanency plan.

Alternative plans follow a cascad-

ing order, starting with adoption, with a preference for kinship adoption as the next best option for permanence. If adoption is not possible, the social worker will consider the potential for legal guardianship. Finally, the last option is the foster care system. Foster care is intended to be temporary, with reunification being the focus whenever possible. Successful reunification is the most common path for children exiting the dependency system.

The path to reunification is not easy — it takes work, commitment and investment of time and resources, not only by the parents, but also by family members, social workers, foster parents, service providers, courts and the community. Through this process, we hope other parents are inspired by successful parents and caregivers who show them it is possible to address and resolve the issues that led to their separation and reunify with their children.

**“When children have been removed from their parents or caregivers as a result of abuse or neglect, our first goal is always to reunite them with their families as quickly as possible. Our dedicated social workers collaborate with families to create a case plan of activities that builds on strengths and outlines services such as substance abuse treatment and therapy to address the concerns that brought the family to our attention. We strive to ensure parents have the tools they need to create safe and loving environments for their kids.”**

—Kim Ragen, Deputy Division Director,  
SSA Children & Family Services

# Modernizing the Client Experience at SSA's Regional Offices

BY TRACI MULDOON  
STAFF SPECIALIST

To streamline traffic flow and minimize the time clients spend at our offices, the Lobby Management Workgroup has launched a new technology system called NEMO-Q to create a uniform process across regional office lobbies to help meet the needs of our clients seeking in-person services.

NEMO-Q is a virtual lobby management ticketing system that allows customers to obtain a ticket and secure their place in line through a digital kiosk to ensure timely service while offering real-time analytics that can boost efficiency.

The initiative to modernize lobby processes is the result of feedback from staff, clients and focus group participants. In 2018, a team of graduate students from the University of California, Irvine conducted a focus group to observe and assess the operational processes of SSA's regional office lobbies through the lens of a client. The focus group found a need for a more client-friendly experience, an automated check-in system with shorter wait times and a structured lobby flow.

The previous ticketing process often redirected clients to more than one service window after their ticket was called before assigning them to the appropriate window most equipped to assist with their needs. However, with NEMO-Q, SSA clients are immediately issued a ticket from a kiosk when they enter the lobby and are called to one of the respective windows. Assigned eligibility staff are then able to provide assistance regarding their case on the spot.

SSA launched the NEMO-Q software at Anaheim Regional Center (ARC) in August 2021, followed by Santa Ana Regional Center (SARC), Cypress Regional Center (CRC), Laguna Hills Regional Center, Eckhoff Main Office and Adult Protective Services in spring of 2022. The project was a collaborative effort between Orange County Information Technology, SAIC, Centralized Operations, Facilities, Contracts and Procurement, Community and Government Relations, Research and subject matter experts at ARC, CRC and SARC.



Office Technicians Julian Cervantes and Amber Borja walk through the new NEMO-Q system at SSA's ARC office.

With NEMO-Q in full operation, SSA offices now have access to reporting analytics on the customer experience that were previously not available in SSA's lobbies. In addition to traffic flow, NEMO-Q delivers information about lobby peak times and additional metrics that help us be more responsive to the needs of the clients.

"In the words of user experience expert Sean Gerety, 'The technology you use impresses no one. The experience you create with it is everything.' My hope is that NEMO-Q has created a positive experience, which will lead to greater use of technology to enhance efficiency when serving our clients," said Pelayo Pelayo, Family-Self Sufficiency & Adult Services Administrative Manager II.



# Contracts Services Team: Helping to Improve Agency Efficiency

BY MICHAEL KIM  
STAFF SPECIALIST



SSA Contracts Services Team at SSA's Headquarters.

In February, the County Procurement Officer swore in 13 Contracts Services Team members for the role of Deputy Purchasing Agent (DPA), granting them the authority to procure services and commodities for SSA.

Previously, only the Agency Director or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors could authorize purchases. Now, deputized Staff Specialists can sign contracts/Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) of up to \$200,000, while Contract Administrators (Administrative Managers I) can execute contracts/MOUs above that threshold upon approval by the Board. Being staffed with DPAs, Contracts Services is now able to

execute human service agreements on behalf of SSA, which will improve the efficiency of our Agency business procedures and timelines.

To become DPAs, staff first enrolled in a "Foundations of Strategy and Policy" training course administered by the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing that focuses on procurement functions within governmental entities. Then staff had to pass a post-course assessment before being awarded a certificate of completion. Upon receiving a certificate of course completion, staff also completed the three-hour DPA Exam before officially swearing in as DPAs. To remain certi-

fied, staff must attend a minimum of 10 hours of training annually and complete the DPA Recertification Exam every two years.

"The ability for Contracts staff to execute human services contracts will streamline the process of obtaining signatures for contract execution," Administrative Manager II for Contracts Services Karen Vu said. "This change was implemented to improve our efficiency and we are happy to have additional staff sworn in as DPAs to procure services on behalf of the Agency."

Congratulations to the Contracts Services Team on this accomplishment!

# Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action

## Maria Arredondo

Eligibility Technician, Assistance Programs



*Maria received the following words of recognition regarding her exceptional service from a client:*

“A customer called to thank Maria for going above and beyond to provide excellent customer service. The client felt overwhelmed taking care of her benefits for the first time since her husband passed away. Maria took the time to explain everything in great detail to the client. The customer stated, ‘If there were more Maria’s just like you, this world would be a better place.’ Thank you, Maria, for the outstanding service you provided to the client and those you work with.”

## Rachel Levin

Administrative Manager II, Children & Family Services

*Rachel received the following words of gratitude from her staff:*

“We would wholeheartedly like to express our sincere appreciation for Rachel’s leadership and support in the Specialized Family Services Continuing and Court Officers Program. Rachel demonstrates leadership through her dynamic interaction with the supervisors and line workers. She is an approachable, supportive and encouraging manager who welcomes feedback and takes every opportunity to improve morale and enhance service. We would like to let Rachel know we appreciate all that she has done for us, and we are very lucky to have her as our Program Manager.”



## Thuha Tran

Eligibility Technician, Assistance Programs



*Thuha was recognized by a customer for her thoughtfulness and great customer service:*

“Thuha went out of her way to make a three-way phone call to assist a customer who was having issues setting up their EBT card. The customer was able to successfully set up and use her card to purchase groceries that same day. The customer stated Thuha did a beautiful job in communicating and providing clear information to her and she was very grateful to have been helped by Thuha. Thank you, Thuha, for your great work and amazing customer service!”



# Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action

## Layla Kialashaki

Senior Social Services Supervisor, Children & Family Services

Layla received the following praise from a former colleague:

“Throughout my time working with Layla, she has been a great listener and has consistently advised and directed me when needed. It is because of her assistance that I feel that I was able to thrive. Layla is one of the most professional and insightful colleagues I had the pleasure to work with. She truly is a credit to this profession.”



## Patricia Alcantar, Assadullah Niazi and Kimberly Vu

Eligibility Supervisors, Assistance Programs

Patricia, Assadullah and Kimberly received the following words of appreciation from a colleague:

“We would like to express our thanks to Patricia, Assadullah and Kimberly for their outstanding efforts in facilitating and presenting the Modified Adjusted Gross Income for CalWORKs Denial training for Family Self-Sufficiency staff. Your commendable skills, diligence, patience and attention to detail make us extremely proud of every one of you. Thank you for volunteering to lead this training effort. Your willingness to deliver high-quality work is admirable and has inspired us. Keep progressing and keep up your great work!”



**Gina Espinoza**, Senior Social Worker,  
**Kristen Stits**, Senior Social Worker,  
**Brittney Chambless**, Senior Social Services Supervisor,  
**Brian Satterfield**, Senior Social Services Supervisor,  
**Javier Guerrero**, Administrative Manager I,  
**Jane Collier**, Administrative Manager II,  
**Randy Balduck**, Administrative Manager II  
**Kim Ragen**, Deputy Division Director

Several SSA staff received the following words of gratitude for their work in responding to a client's caregiver:

“The Quality Support Team received a telephone call from a maternal aunt of a client who came to Orange County in an effort to be assigned as her nephew's legal guardian instead of placing the child in foster care. At the time of the call, the aunt was staying in a hotel in Orange County out of pocket. With immediate and extensive collaboration, the aunt received the emotional and financial support she needed pending her approval to leave the state with the child. This team provided outstanding advocacy, case management and oversight to ensure all involved were up to date and eventual progress of moving the child out of state with the aunt. This was a team effort made possible by the work of all involved.”



# APS: Expanded Services for Clients

BY JAMIE CARGO  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I

In honor of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, recognized on June 15 each year, Adult Protective Services (APS) would like to highlight projects and initiatives the team has undertaken this year to support Orange County's senior residents.

In January, new legislation expanded service eligibility to seniors ages 60-64. Eligible older adults may receive an assessment from APS if abuse or neglect is suspected. APS will intervene when necessary and provide community resources and education. Dependent adults ages 18 to 59 who have physical or mental limitations that restrict their ability to carry out normal activities or to protect their rights, or whose physical or mental abilities have diminished because of age, are also eligible for services. Since the change on Jan. 1, of the 9,162 clients APS has served, 795 clients were part of the 60-64 age group.

This expansion in eligibility was part of Assembly Bill 135 (2021), which aims to enable APS to provide longer term case manage-

ment and earlier intervention for clients with more complex cases. The goal is to stabilize the client in an environment that provides as much freedom as possible while reducing the risk of abuse or neglect, including self-neglect. This can be accomplished through assisting clients in making changes that enable them to protect themselves in the future, enhance their problem-solving and coping skills and improve their quality of life with the help of connections to community resources and services. APS began providing longer term case management in June.

APS also implemented the Home Safe Program this year, a

state-funded and county-administered program to support the safety and housing stability of APS clients by providing housing-related assistance, using evidence-based practices for homelessness assistance and prevention. Home Safe serves APS clients experiencing homelessness or who may be at imminent risk of homelessness due to elder or dependent adult abuse, neglect, self-neglect or financial exploitation.

To learn more about elder abuse, please visit:

[www.ssa.ocgov.com/abuse/elder](http://www.ssa.ocgov.com/abuse/elder).



## Volunteering for Everyone Counts OC 2022

BY MICHAEL POURARYAN  
ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN

In February, I had the pleasure of volunteering as part of the evening clean-up crew for the 2022 Everyone Counts OC Point-In-Time Count. This biennial count of homeless individuals guides how the County of Orange and its partners can best support individuals experiencing homelessness.



Michael Pouraryan

My shift took place at the **Laguna Niguel Library**, where I was tasked with helping the deployment center close for the night. I was responsible for checking in teams who surveyed the homeless population and accounting for the kits

prepared by CityNet, a nonprofit partner overseeing the Point-in-Time Count process. The kits, handed out to individuals experiencing homelessness, contained healthy snacks, hygiene supplies, gift cards and notes of encouragement.

The deployment center had a dashboard with markers indicating the locations the teams visited. Seeing how many locations the teams covered made me proud to be a part of the effort. It felt great to witness such selfless souls in action and to see volunteers out in the field, walking the streets to have contact with those experiencing homelessness in Orange County. I feel fortunate that I was able to do my small part in making a difference. When future opportunities arise, I encourage my colleagues to consider signing up.



# Cultural Recognition

BY NOAH DAVIS

VIDEO AND COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

The summer season marks several observances recognizing the cultural diversity of our nation and world, along with some special days of observance. Read below to learn more.

## LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Pride Month is an annual celebration among the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+) community to commemorate the Stonewall Riots of June 1969 in New York City — a series of protests, rallies and other activism in response to repeated police harassment of the city's gay, lesbian and transgender population. The riots serve as a landmark in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights and is called one of the most important events in the Gay Liberation Movement. During Pride Month, members of the LGBTQ+ community, including allies, friends and family, participate in parades, parties and festivals, and dressing up in all colors of the rainbow to demonstrate their pride and support.



## Juneteenth

Juneteenth — also known as Freedom Day, Liberation Day and Jubilee Day — is a federal holiday celebrated in commemoration of the end of slavery and the beginning of freedom for African Americans in the U.S. Originating in Galveston, Texas, in 1865, the observance of June 19 as African American Emancipation Day has spread throughout the U.S. and beyond with celebrations, guest speakers, picnics and family gatherings. Juneteenth is significant in helping shape and influence society in the U.S.

## Territory Day

Territory Day is celebrated in the Northern Territory of Australia on July 1 each year in recognition of the 1978 anniversary when the Northern Territory of Australia gained their independence from the Commonwealth Government of Australia. Territory Day acknowledges the past, present and emerging Traditional Owners of the Australian land and is celebrated with firework displays, concerts and community events.



## Keti Koti

Keti Koti is a celebratory festival commemorating the emancipation of slaves in Suriname and the Netherlands in 1863. Meaning “broken chains,” Keti Koti takes place on July 1 each year to honor liberty, equality and solidarity by holding street parades, playing music, dancing and sharing tasty foods.

## French-American Heritage Month

French American Heritage Month is recognized in July and celebrated by Americans across the nation. The French immigrated to the U.S. as early as 1820 and helped build society through their contributions in laws, art, culture, language, food, social etiquette and more. Nearly 11.8 million Americans of French or French Canadian descent live and work in the U.S.



## Independence Day/Fourth of July



Independence Day, also known as the Fourth of July, is a federal holiday that takes place on July 4 each year to celebrate America's freedom after the founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The Fourth of July is celebrated with festivities ranging from fireworks, parades and concerts to family gatherings and barbecues. The holiday is also recognized by hanging the American flag in front of homes, plants and buildings and wearing red, white and blue to honor the U.S. flag colors.

## The Martyrdom of the Bab

Celebrated on July 10 this year, the Martyrdom of the Bab honors the co-founder of the Baha'i faith in Persia, the Bab, who was executed in 1850. Bahá'ís commemorate the Martyrdom of the Báb with prayers and scripture. Specifically, the Bahá'í scripture is called Tablets of Visitation.



## Tisha B'Av



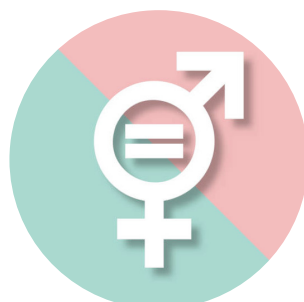
Tisha B'Av, the ninth day of the month of Av on the Jewish calendar is a day of communal mourning, fasting and praying. Taking place August 6-7 this year, Tisha B'Av is part of the "three-week culmination" that commemorates the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. During Tisha B'Av, it is tradition to refrain from public celebrations such as weddings and abstain from vanity and hygiene practices such as showers/bathes, shaving for the men and wearing of perfumes, ointments and leather. The Book of Lamentations ("Megillat Eicha") and other dirges ("kinot") are also read throughout Tisha B'Av.

## World Humanitarian Day

Celebrated in August each month, World Humanitarian Day honors humanitarian aid workers around the world. Established by the U.N. in 2009, World Humanitarian Day commemorates the anniversary of the bombing of the U.N. headquarters in Iraq where 22 people lost their lives, including the U.N.'s High Commissioner for Human Rights. The day is recognized by bringing awareness and educating those around us about the importance of humanitarian rights. In 2021, 235 million people in 26 countries required humanitarian assistance.



## Women's Equality Day



Women's Equality Day commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting women the right to vote. The amendment was first introduced in 1878 and ratified in 1920. In 1971, the U.S. Congress designated August 26 as Women's Equality Day. The day can be honored by supporting women-owned companies, encouraging the female community to register to vote and sharing sweet gestures of support to the women close in one's life.



# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Anaya Sanabria, Gregorio	Administrative Manager I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Biles, Roxanne Koyumi	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Castellon, Luis Alfredo	Office Supervisor C	Children & Family Services
Cedeno, Anthony Elias	Office Specialist	Administrative Services
Chavarria, Mayra Vanessa	Social Services Supervisor II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Cheng, Nancy Bui	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Cipriano, Kristin Ashley-Leihuana	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Fladger, Clette	Staff Specialist	Children & Family Services
Forotan, Gloria	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Garcia, Jose A	Group Counselor II	Children & Family Services
Gonzalez, Andrea	Staff Specialist	Assistance Programs
Gonzalez, Marieth	Staff Specialist	Administrative Services
Graham Galli, Maria Del Rosario	Eligibility Supervisor	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Harper, David P	Administrative Manager II	Children & Family Services
Hernandez, Norena	Office Supervisor B	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Huynh, Tiffany-Trang T	Social Services Supervisor II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Li, Ran	Sr. Social Worker	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Lomeli, Evelyn Del Rocio	Office Specialist	Administrative Services
Lopez, Elsa	Administrative Manager I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Martinez, Rosa D	Data Entry Technician	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Nguyen, Cuong V	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Nungaray, Mary H	Social Services Supervisor I	Assistance Programs
Paramo, Nadia Marie	Information Processing Technician	Children & Family Services
Ramirez, Amber Ralene	Social Worker I	Administrative Services
Reed, Kim	Administrative Manager III	Assistance Programs
Rodriguez, Jenifer Lyn	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
Rodriguez, Marlene	Group Counselor II	Children & Family Services

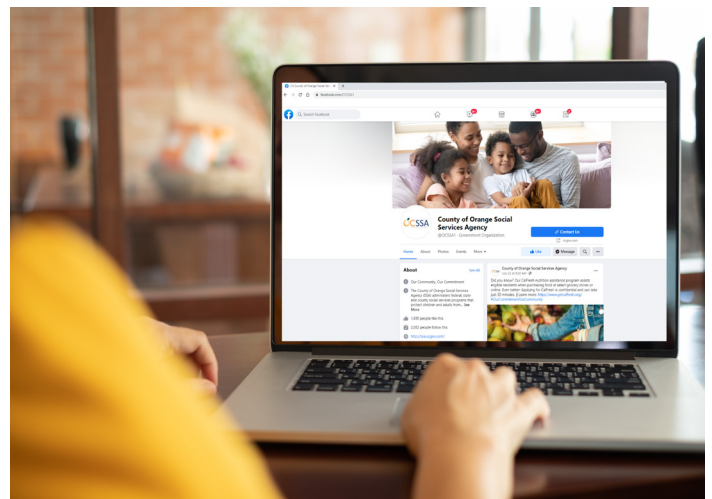
# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Rojas Almazan, Michelle Louise	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Romero, Marisol	Social Services Supervisor I	Assistance Programs
Sanford, Guadalupe Mancilla	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Sen, Maly	Information Processing Technician	Children & Family Services
Ueda, Michael S	Administrative Manager II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Urquiza, Elena Maria	Staff Specialist	Children & Family Services
Vicencio, Nadia	Staff Specialist	Assistance Programs
Vindigni, Federico Martin	Administrative Manager I	Assistance Programs
Windsor, Doug R	Eligibility Technician	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

**Looking to promote?** Be sure to stay up to date on current job opportunities here at SSA and throughout the County! To view current recruitments, sign up for job alerts and/or apply, click [here](#). For frequently asked questions about the County job application process, including links to practice online assessments, click [here](#).

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